

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 119550

FOL RPT CAIRO 8643 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 23 MAY.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 8643

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (STONE, RICHARD)

SUBJECT: CODEL STONE

REF: (A) STATE 114446 (TOSEC 040331), (B) SECTO 4124,
(C) SECTO 4125

1. WHEN MEETING WITH FAHMY LAST NIGHT, I AGAIN RAISED
THE SUBJECT OF SENATOR STONE'S VISIT. AFTER READING HIM
MOST OF SENATOR STONE'S MESSAGE (REF A), I CONVEYED YOUR
VIEWS AS SET FORTH REF B. I SAID YOU UNDERSTOOD THE
PROBLEMS WHICH THE SENATOR'S REQUEST POSES FOR GOE AND
THAT YOU HAD COMMUNICATED WITH THE SENATOR FOR EXPRESS THE
HOPE THAT HE WILL RECONSIDER HIS DECISION TO CANCEL HIS
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PROPOSED VISIT TO EGYPT. AT THE SAME TIME, YOU HOPED
FAHMY COULD RECONSIDER HIS OPPOSITION TO THE SENATOR'S
PROPOSED TRAVEL FROM CAIRO TO TEL AVIV VIA SFM. I AGAIN
REMIND HIM OF THE SENATOR'S HELPFULNESS WITH RESPECT TO
ECONOMIC AID FOR EGYPT AND OF HIS POSITION. IT WOULD BE
UNFORTUNATE IF, BECAUSE OF THE INCIDENT, THE SENATOR
WERE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS THAT LEAD HIM TO BE LESS CONVINCED

OF GOE COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND LESS SUPPORTIVE OF US POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST. SINCE THE SENATOR HAS A TIGHT TIMING PROBLEM, WITH THE SENATE RECONVENING ON JUNE 8, A DIRECT TRANSIT ACROSS SINAI WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY MORE CONVENIENT. YOU HOPED THAT FAHMY COULD AGREE TO ACCOMMODATE THE SENATOR AS A SPECIAL CASE, WHICH SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A PRECEDENT FOR THE FUTURE. YOU WOULD URGE THE SENATOR TO TRY TO AVOID PUBLICITY THAT COULD BE EMBARRASSING TO THE GOE.

2. FAHMY WAS ADAMANT. HAD THE ISRAELIS NOT PUBLICLY SPOKEN ABOUT "OPEN BRIDGES," HE CONTENDED, HE COULD HAVE ACCOMMODATED THE SENATOR. AFTER ISRAELI PUBLICITY FOR "OPEN BRIDGES," HE COULD NOT DO SO NOW. EVEN THOUGH THE SENATOR MIGHT AVOID PUBLICITY, THE ISRAELIS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY SEIZE UPON IT. MOREOVER, WITH BEGIN NOW THE LIKELY HEAD OF GOVT IN ISRAEL AND ANNOUNCING AS ONE OF HIS FIRST ACTS THAT THE WEST BANK AND GAZA ARE INTEGRAL PARTS OF ISRAEL, HOW COULD GOE AGREE TO AN ACTION WHICH WOULD BE GRIST FOR THE ISRAELI PUBLICITY MILL?

3. FAHMY REITERATED HIS HIGH REGARD FOR THE SENATOR, BUT HOPED THE SENATOR WOULD UNDERSTAND GOE'S DILEMMA. SHOULD WORD OF SUCH A TRANSIT GET OUT, AS IT ASSUREDLY WOULD, THE IRAQIS, LIBYANS AND OTHER CRITICS OF SADAT WOULD HAVE A FIELD DAY. THE SFM WOULD BE BRANDED AS PART OF AN AMERICAN PLOY TO FACILITATE "OPEN BRIDGES." MOREOVER, WHILE FAHMY WOULD LIKE TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR REQUEST, HE SIMPLY COULD NOT DO SO. ONCE A PARTY HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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TRAVELED THAT WAY, SIMILAR OFFICIAL REQUESTS ARE INEVITABLE. DEPT COULD NOT GUARANTEE HIM THAT THERE WILL NOT BE SIMILAR REQUESTS IN THE FUTURE FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, FAHMY REGRETFULLY FELT THAT GOE POSITION ON THIS MATTER MUST BE FIRM. THE SENATOR SHOULD NOT DRAW ANY CONCLUSION THAT EGYPT IS LESS INTERESTED IN PEACE BECAUSE OF ITS REFUSAL TO PERMIT SUCH DIRECT TRANSIT. ON THE CONTRARY, GOE REMAINS COMMITTED TO WORK FOR A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE AND WILL DO ITS UTMOST TO ACHIEVE THIS.

4. FAHMY SAID HE WISHED TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE TO SENATOR STONE AND CERTAINLY HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE SENATOR'S PROPOSED INSPECTION OF SFM. HE SUGGESTED THREE ALTERNATIVES:

(A) THE SENATOR COULD BE FLOWN FROM CAIRO TO SFM AND BACK THE SAME DAY. GOE WOULD PROVIDE AIRCRAFT. HIS ONWARD TRIP TO TEL AVIV WOULD, HOWEVER, HAVE TO BE

MADE THE CUSTOMARY WAY.

(B) THE SENATOR MIGHT VISIT ISRAEL FIRST AND GO TO THE SFM SITE FROM THERE, PROCEEDING TO CAIRO FROM TEL AVIV BY THE CUSTOMARY WAY. IN FACT, FAHMY OBSERVED, GOE WOULD IN MANY WAYS PREFER THE SENATOR TO COME HERE LAST, IF THIS WERE CONVENIENT. WITH BEGIN ABOUT TO FORM A GOVT, GOE WOULD VALUE ANY FIRSTHAND ASSESSMENT THAT THE SENATOR MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE.

(C) SOLELY TO BE HELPFUL TO THE SENATOR, AND IN RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST, HE WOULD AGREE THAT THE SENATOR ALONE TRAVEL FROM CAIRO TO TEL AVIV VIA SFM. THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SENATOR'S PARTY WOULD HAVE TO PROCEED THE NORMAL WAY. SUCH A PROCEDURE, IN HIS VIEW, WOULD ENABLE GOE TO MAKE A BETTER CASE THAT THE SENATOR'S TRAVEL WAS A ONE-TIME EXCEPTION AND NOT A PRECEDENT. IT COULD THEN CONFIDENTIAL

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POINT OUT THAT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY HAD TO PROCEED THE CUSTOMARY WAY. I TOLD FAHMY THAT I WOULD CONVEY THIS, BUT I THOUGHT IT IMPRACTICAL. SINCE HE HAD AGREED TO THE SENATOR GOING, IT SEEMED ONLY REASONABLE THAT THE SENATOR'S WIFE AND TWO ADIES SHOULD ALSO BE ALLOWED TO GO THAT WAY. FAHMY, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT HAVE IT AND INSISTED THIS WAS THE BEST HE COULD DO.

5. PLEASE INFORM SENATOR STONE OF THE RESULTS OF OUR LATEST EFFORTS IN HIS BEHALF AND ASCERTAIN IF ANY OF THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES SUGGESTED BY FAHMY IS AGREEABLE. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT A VISIT BY THE SENATOR WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE AND HELPFUL TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.
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UNQUOTE VANCE

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